

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSC-01 OMB-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

ACDA-19 IO-14 DRC-01 /113 W  
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O R 031156Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1376

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 8109

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, KS

SUBJ: NEW ROK CABINET

REF SEOUL 8080

1. EXTENSIVE CABINET CHANGES ANNOUNCED DEC 3 CAME MUCH EARLIER THAN EXPECTED AND WERE APPARENTLY DECIDED BY PRESIDENT IN PAST FEW DAYS. A MAJOR CABINET RESHUFFLE HAD BEEN EXPECTED LATER IN THE MONTH, AFTER KOREA/JAPAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE.

2. SOME EARLIER SIGNALS WHICH GOVERNMENT HAD GIVEN RE CABINET CHANGE HAD BEEN TO EFFECT THERE WOULD BE SOME INFUSION OF NEW BLOOD IN AN EFFORT TO CREATE PUBLIC IMPRESSION OF MORE MODERATION. IN FACT CABINET RETAINS A NUMBER OF OLD FACES AND THE "NEW MEN" HAVE BACKGROUND OF CLOSE TIES WITH PRESIDENT PARK. IN PRESENT SITUATION PARK, AS HE HAS DONE IN THE PAST, HAS TURNED TO MEN HE KNOWS WELL AND TRUSTS./\$

3. OUR INITIAL IMPRESSION OF THE CABINET AS IT IS  
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RECONSTITUTED IS THAT IT IS COMPOSED OF MEN WHO ARE

COMPLETELY RESPONSIVE TO PRESIDENT'S POLITICAL WISHES. NEW CABINET MEMBERS INCLUDE THREE RETIRED SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS (DEFENSE, COMMUNICATIONS AND GOVT ADMINISTRATION) AND A BLUE HOUSE POLITICAL ASSISTANT (HOME AFFAIRS). ALL OF THE NEW CABINET MEMBERS ALREADY HAD OCCUPIED GOVERNMENT POSTS. TWO NATIONAL ASSEMBLYMEN NAMED HAVE NO MAJOR POLITICAL STANDING (ONE IS YUCHONGHOE APPOINTED ASSEMBLYMAN; THE OTHER DRP AND A FORMER JCS CHIEF).

4. IN ECONOMIC FIELD ONLY CHANGE WAS EXCHANGE OF PORTFOLIOS BY YI NAK-SON AND CHANG YE-CHUN. CHANG HAS HAD LONG AND CLOSE TIES WITH U.S. SENIOR ECONOMIC OFFICERS AND HIS APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY HIGHLY FAVORABLE IN OUR TERMS.

5. MAJOR NON-CABINET CHANGE ANNOUNCED IS REPLACEMENT OF YI HU-RAK AS CIA DIRECTOR BY SHIN CHIK-SU. THERE HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD CONSENSUS THAT YI HAD TO BE REPLACED IF THE GOVERNMENT'S IMAGE WAS TO BE IMPROVED AFTER KIM TAE CHUNG CASE. SHIN HAS LONG-TIME CLOSE TIES WITH PRESIDENT AND DOES HAVE BETTER PERSONAL REPUTATION. HE IS ALSO A FORMER DEPUTY CIA DIRECTOR AND HAS HAD PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD. SHIN WILL BE A LESS VISIBLE AND LESS CONTROVERSIAL DIRECTOR, BUT ONE RESPONSIVE TO PARK'S WISHES. WE WILL SUBMIT SEPARATE BIO REPORT AND COMMENTS ON AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO U.S. HAM PYONG-CHUN.

6. WE HAVE NO PRESENT READING ON WHAT CABINET RESHUFFLE MEANS IN TERMS OF EARLIER INDICATIONS WE HAVE RECEIVED THAT PRES PARK IS PLANNING MOVE TOWARDS MORE MODERATE POLICIES IN THE NEW YEAR. CONTINUATION OF KIM CHONG-PIL AS PRIME MINISTER WAS EXPECTED AND IS BEING INTERPRETED AS INDICATION HIS MORE MODERATE STANCE HAS WON OUT AGAINST YI HU-RAK. HOWEVER, CABINET AS A WHOLE HAS NO DISTINCTIVE COLORATION OUTSIDE OF LOYALTY TO PARK.

7. GIVEN PRESENT POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WE EXPECT PUBLIC REACTION TO BE CAUTIOUS, WELCOMING FACT OF A CONFIDENTIAL

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MAJOR GOVERNMENTAL RESHUFFLE AND THE REMOVAL OF YI HU-RAK. AT THE SAME TIME THERE IS A SAMENESS ABOUT THE FACES WHICH WILL PROBABLY PRECLUDE HIGH PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS. UNDERHILL

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## Message Attributes

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**Subject:** NEW ROK CABINET  
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